



Town of Groton, Connecticut

Meeting Minutes

Town Council

45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk 860-441-6640
Town Manager
860-441-6630

Mayor Heather Bond Somers, Councilors Dean G. Antipas, Bruce S. Flax, Bill Johnson, Karen F. Morton, Deborah L. Peruzzotti, Rita M. Schmidt, James L. Streeter, and Harry A. Watson

Tuesday, March 19, 2013

7:30 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

REGULAR MEETING

I. ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 p.m. by Mayor Somers.

Members Present: Mayor Somers, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Flax, Councilor Morton, Councilor Peruzzotti, Councilor Schmidt, Councilor Streeter and Councilor Watson

Members Absent: Councilor Johnson

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher and Office Assistant Lori Watrous.

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Salute to the Flag was led by Robert Frink.

III. RECOGNITION, AWARDS & MEMORIALS

None.

IV. RECEIPT OF CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Jack Sebastian, 4 East Shore Avenue, an RTM member, asked the Council to direct the Town Manager to develop a budget with no mill rate increase. He stated that he continues to hear that taxes have gone up more than inflation. Mr. Sebastian feels that the Town needs to reduce property taxes to attract more business to Groton.

Christine Cabral, 66 Latham Street, believes that eliminating Groton's interdistrict magnet school transportation is a mistake. Ms. Cabral stated that the transportation costs are fully reimbursable by a State grant. Through FOI requests, Ms. Cabral found out that the grant money is received in two installments, which are received by the Town and then rolled into the \$72+ million education budget.

Kate MacArevey-Colello, 80 School Street, stated that eliminating interdistrict magnet school transportation will affect more than 140 Groton students and their families. Many of the children that will be affected have only attended magnet schools; impacts will be felt in parents' work schedules due to the time it takes for transporting their children to and from school; and logistical problems may arise if there are other siblings that need someone home to meet the bus.

Robert Frink, 144 Seneca Drive, presented a petition signed by 121 residents of the Noank Fire District urging the Town Council to deny the request by the Noank Fire District to use the former Noank Elementary School. Petitioners feel that this will result in an unwanted financial burden; the condition of the building is beyond repair, and the plan does not warrant the potential investment. He noted that many Noank residents were not aware of the reuse initiative.

V. RESPONSES TO CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Mayor Somers stated that while the grant money for the interdistrict magnet school transportation is received by the Town, it is designated for the Board of Education.

The Town Manager remarked that the Town provides over \$70 million for the education budget. Out of this amount, Federal reimbursement is \$3-\$4 million and the State reimbursement is \$30 million. The grant for interdistrict magnet school transportation is a reimbursable grant. The Town only gets reimbursed if it provides the service. He speculated that the BOE may be looking at freeing up that dollar figure to pay for other things in its budget such as buses needed for redistricting.

Councilor Flax encouraged Mr. Frink and those who signed the petition to let the Noank Fire District officials know how they feel about utilizing the Noank School.

Mayor Somers noted that she has asked Carolyn Dickey to put together a cost analysis detailing the costs for students currently going to interdistrict magnet schools and the cost if those same were to attend Groton schools. The Mayor noted that the Town Council will meet with the Board of Education on March 26, 2013.

The Town Manager stated that another alternative, and not one that he would advocate at this point, is to set up a separate cost center for interdistrict magnet school transportation, similar to the VNA cost center. The item would no longer appear in the education portion of the budget.

VI. CONSENT CALENDAR

a. Approval of Minutes

2013-0085 Approval of Minutes (Town Council)

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council meeting of March 5, 2013 are hereby accepted and approved.

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

b. Administrative Items

2013-0070 Special Trust Fund Contributions

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING CONTRIBUTIONS TO SPECIAL TRUST FUNDS

RESOLVED, that the Town Council hereby accepts contributions to the Town as follows:

City of Groton - \$1,106.40 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Joan Feeney - \$50.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Anna Marie Landry - \$20.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Gloria Marshall - \$50.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Herta Payson - \$100.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Anne-Marie Quagliaroli - \$15.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Stebbins Real Estate - \$50.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
William White - \$10.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Paul Yatcko - \$100.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

c. Deletions from the Town Council Referral List

2012-0175 FYE 2014 Budget Process

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - No further action on the Consent Calendar.

2013-0053 National League of Cities (NLC) Conference

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - No further action on the Consent Calendar.

2013-0063 Department of Education Youth and Family Services Funding

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2013-0064 Department of Education Youth Services Enhancement Grant

- This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.
- 2013-0065 Supportive Housing Program Grant**
- This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.
- 2013-0071 Emergency Election Procedures**
- This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - No further action on the Consent Calendar.
- 2013-0072 Revised Agreement with Milone and MacBroom for a Long-Range School Facilities Plan**
- This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.
- 2013-0073 Adoption of an Ordinance Changing and Redefining the Voting Districts**
- This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - No further action on the Consent Calendar.
- 2013-0077 Port Security Grant - Marine Group Equipment (Additional Funds)**
- This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.
- 2013-0080 Reappointment of Susan Marquardt to Zoning Commission**
- This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.
- 2013-0081 Reappointment of Steven Carlow to Ledge Light Health District Board of Directors**
- This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.
- 2013-0082 Reappointment of Eleanor Schoolcraft to Community Development Advisory Committee**
- This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.
- 2013-0083 Appointment of Meredith Russell to Housing Authority**
- This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.
- 2013-0084 Appointment of Susan Sayer as a Regular Member of the Zoning Commission**
- This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

Passed The Consent Calendar

A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Streeter, to adopt the Consent Calendar, including all the preceding items marked as having been adopted on the Consent Calendar. The motion carried unanimously

VII. COMMUNICATION REPORTS (Other than Committee Reports)

a. Town Councilors

Councilors received communications regarding parking spaces in downtown Mystic, the FYE2014 budget, the proposed blight ordinance, the reuse of Noank School, interdistrict magnet school transportation, downtown Mystic sidewalks, Poquonnock Bridge Fire District issues, the pistol permit process in Groton, and alcohol at Town sponsored events.

Councilor Morton met with a business owner who proposed forming a business advisory council to give feedback on how proposals will affect local businesses.

Councilor Schmidt attended the Energy, Efficiency and Conservation Committee meeting and provided a brief report.

Councilor Peruzzotti attended the School Facilities Initiative Task Force meeting.

Councilor Streeter gave an update on the Groton Veterans' Memorial Park project. He noted that a recent fundraiser at Par Four for the benefit of Social Services and the Groton Veterans' Memorial Park project resulted in \$1,700 for each group.

Mayor Somers had meetings with Alan Ackley of the Poquonnock Bridge Fire District, the chief of staff for Governor Malloy, representatives of the Noank Fire District, and parents of the magnet

school students. The Town Manager and Mayor Somers participated in a walk-thru of the Pfizer building with a potentially interested party. The Mystic Irish Parade will be held on March 24, 2013. The Mayor noted that Mr. Wing was crowned Mr. Falcon on March 16, 2013.

b. Clerk of the Representative Town Meeting

The next meeting of the RTM will be held on April 10, 2013. The Town Clerk noted that RTM members should pick up their budget books at the Town Clerk's Office at their earliest convenience.

c. Clerk of the Council

The Town Clerk announced that Groton land records are available on the Connecticut Town Clerks' Portal. She noted that income from the portal for copy fees was \$879 last month.

d. Town Manager

The Town Manager noted that the Town's bond rating has been affirmed with a stable outlook. It was noted that the Town has a concentrated tax base, satisfactory reserves, and a stable employment base. General Fund savings over 18 years is estimated to be \$1.5 million, with savings on sewer operating bonds at \$159,000.

As a result of recent storms, curbside pick up of brush will be performed by the Public Works Department between now and March 28, 2013. Residents should call to schedule a pick up. The Town Manager stated that a public informational meeting on potential airport improvements will be held on April 2, 2013; funding for the purchase of the Spicer and Fusconi properties has been received; the School Facilities Initiative Task Force will be rescheduling its April meeting; and a public hearing on the budget will be held March 28, 2013.

The Town Manager stated that the RTM has requested that he develop an alternative budget that shows a zero mill rate increase. The proposed FYE 2013/2014 budget is up \$3.9 million. He will put a list together of preliminary items for potential reductions and present it to the Town Council on March 26, 2013, and at the public hearing. He noted that there are implications to the proposed cuts and some may not even be possible.

e. Town Attorney

No report.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Community & Cultural Development - Chairman Schmidt

No meeting, no report.

b. Economic Development - Chairman Johnson

No meeting, no report.

c. Education/Health & Social Services - Chairman Watson

No meeting, no report.

d. Environment/Energy - Chairman Peruzzotti

No meeting, no report.

e. Finance - Chairman Morton

No meeting, no report.

f. Personnel/Appointments/Rules - Chairman Flax

Councilor Flax read the minutes of March 5, 2013, which are on file at the Town Clerk's office.

g. Public Safety - Chairman Streeter

No meeting, no report.

h. Public Works/Recreation - Chairman Antipas

No meeting, no report.

i. Committee of the Whole - Mayor Somers

Mayor Somers noted that the Committee of the Whole discussed a public hearing regarding voter redistricting, community access television, Parks and Recreation regulations regarding alcohol at Town sponsored events, a proposed blight ordinance, an agreement with Milone and MacBroom, grants on tonight's agenda, and an emergency election procedure.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

2013-0089 Plan to Reduce the Number of Voting Districts

PLAN TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF VOTING DISTRICTS

Councilor Peruzzotti requested a referral to discuss further reducing the number of voting districts.

X. NEW BUSINESS

2013-0063 Department of Education Youth and Family Services Funding

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TOWN MANAGER TO APPLY TO THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FOR FYE 2014 YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES FUNDING

WHEREAS, crisis intervention, prevention and support programs and short-term counseling services will benefit at-risk Groton youth and their families and

WHEREAS, funding is available from the State of Connecticut Department of Education to supplant a portion of the salaries of Groton Youth and Family Services Counselors who provide intervention and prevention services for at-risk Groton youth, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Manager, Mark R. Oefinger, or his designee, is authorized to file an application with the State of Connecticut Department of Education (DOE) for FYE 14 municipal youth services funding in an amount to be determined by the DOE and to amend contractual agreements for such funding to ensure continuation of short-term counseling, crisis intervention and prevention and support programs for Groton youth and families.

A motion was made by Councilor Antipas, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2013-0064 Department of Education Youth Services Enhancement Grant

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TOWN MANAGER OR HIS DESIGNEE TO APPLY TO THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FOR FYE 2014 YOUTH SERVICE BUREAU ENHANCEMENT GRANT PROGRAM FUNDING

WHEREAS, the State of Connecticut Department of Education offers Enhancement Grant program funding to municipally-based Connecticut youth services programs for supplies and related expenses connected with programs and activities which directly and indirectly benefit Groton youth and families in areas such as youth enrichment, outreach programs, general support and positive youth development, and

WHEREAS, Groton Youth and Family Services has demonstrated its success in providing youth enrichment, outreach programs, general support and positive youth development, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Manager, Mark R. Oefinger, or his designee, is authorized to apply for and contract with the State of Connecticut Department of Education (DOE) for FYE 14 Youth Services Enhancement Grant program funding in an amount to be determined by the DOE.

A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2013-0065

Supportive Housing Program Grant

RESOLUTION APPROVING TVCCA/HUD SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PROGRAM GRANT

WHEREAS, homelessness is being addressed on several fronts by numerous programs but remains an ongoing problem for Groton and neighboring communities, and

WHEREAS, homeless persons with disabilities and homeless families in which at least one member is disabled require extensive counseling, support and case management services, and

WHEREAS, the Supportive Housing Program, operated by TVCCA as the grantee of record with the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, provides funding to enable agencies and municipalities to provide counseling, support and case management services via participation the Housing Collaborative Network, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Council authorizes the Town Manager, Mark R. Oefinger, to enter into an agreement with Thames Valley Council for Community Action, Inc. to accept grant funding in the amount of \$9,000 (or such an amount to be specified) to conduct a Supportive Housing Program in Groton for the period of February 1, 2013 through January 31, 2014 and to utilize said funding to supplant a portion of the salaries and related fringe benefits of selected Groton Human Services staff, who shall provide counseling, support and case management services to the specified Groton client population via participation in the Housing Collaborative Network.

A motion was made by Councilor Morton, seconded by Councilor Antipas, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2013-0072

Revised Agreement with Milone and MacBroom for a Long-Range School Facilities Plan

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TOWN MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A REVISED AGREEMENT WITH MILONE AND MACBROOM FOR A LONG-RANGE SCHOOL FACILITIES PLAN

WHEREAS, the Town Council authorized Town Manager Mark R. Oefinger to sign a Scope of Services and enter into an agreement with Milone and MacBroom for a long-range school facilities plan in October 2012, and

WHEREAS, Milone and MacBroom is working with the School Facilities Initiative Task Force to provide recommendations for the design of a school system that reflects the Town's long-term vision and takes into consideration educational programs, budgets, facilities, and demographic changes, and

WHEREAS, the Town Council has reviewed a detailed expanded Scope of Services (MMI#1461-10-0) dated 2/25/13 with a lump sum fee of \$60,000 (not including direct expenses) that now includes professional services to develop and administer a public opinion survey, and

WHEREAS, the Town Council and RTM have appropriated \$75,000 in a FYE 2013 capital improvement project to define a plan addressing the needs of Groton's public schools, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Council authorizes Town Manager Mark R. Oefinger to sign the above-noted Scope of Services and enter into the revised agreement with Milone and MacBroom for a long-range school facilities plan.

A motion was made by Councilor Peruzzotti, seconded by Councilor Streeter, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2013-0077

Port Security Grant - Marine Group Equipment (Additional Funds)

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING APPLICATION FOR A PORT SECURITY GRANT FOR MARINE PATROL GROUP EQUIPMENT

WHEREAS, the Port Security Grant Program (PSGP) makes grant funding available to law enforcement agencies to support enforcement/homeland security operations, and

WHEREAS, a grant would fund the purchase of cold weather gear for members of the Group II, Port of New London Marine Group to wear during certain water/air temperature conditions as defined by the U.S. Coast Guard for marine operator safety, and

WHEREAS, the Town is eligible for additional funding in the amount of \$33,334.20, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Manager or his designated agent may apply for an additional Port Security Grant of \$33,334.20 to purchase crew dry suits for Marine Group personnel to perform their functions during the winter months.

A motion was made by Councilor Streeter, seconded by Councilor Watson, that this matter be Adopted.

Councilor Peruzzotti noted that equipment will be acquired as a regional effort.

The motion carried unanimously

The appointments/reappointments on tonight's agenda were moved by Councilor Flax, seconded by Councilor Morton and voted on at the same time. All appointments/reappointments passed unanimously.

2013-0080

Reappointment of Susan Marquardt to Zoning Commission

RESOLUTION REAPPOINTING SUSAN MARQUARDT TO THE ZONING COMMISSION

RESOLVED, that Susan Marquardt, 177 Great Brook Road, is hereby reappointed as a member of the Zoning Commission for a term ending 12/31/16.

A motion was made by Councilor Flax, seconded by Councilor Morton, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2013-0081

Reappointment of Steven Carlow to Ledge Light Health District Board of Directors

RESOLUTION REAPPOINTING DR. STEVEN CARLOW TO THE LEDGE LIGHT HEALTH DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

RESOLVED, that Dr. Steven Carlow, 220 Library Street, Mystic is hereby reappointed to the Ledge Light Health District Board of Directors for a term expiring 11/10/15.

A motion was made by Councilor Flax, seconded by Councilor Morton, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2013-0082

Reappointment of Eleanor Schoolcraft to Community Development Advisory Committee

RESOLUTION REAPPOINTING ELEANOR SCHOOLCRAFT TO THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

RESOLVED, that Eleanor Schoolcraft, 350 Ring Drive, is hereby reappointed to the Community Development Advisory Committee for a term expiring 2/7/16.

A motion was made by Councilor Flax, seconded by Councilor Morton, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2013-0083

Appointment of Meredith Russell to Housing Authority

RESOLUTION APPOINTING MEREDITH E. RUSSELL TO THE HOUSING AUTHORITY

RESOLVED, that Meredith Russell, 279 Bridge Street #7, is appointed as a member of the Housing Authority for a term ending 7/31/15.

A motion was made by Councilor Flax, seconded by Councilor Morton, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2013-0084

Appointment of Susan Sayer as a Regular Member of the Zoning Commission

RESOLUTION APPOINTING SUSAN SAYER FROM AN ALTERNATE TO REGULAR MEMBER OF THE ZONING COMMISSION

RESOLVED, that Susan Sayer, 37 Bayview Avenue, Mystic is hereby appointed from an alternate to regular member of the Zoning Commission for a term expiring 12/31/17.

A motion was made by Councilor Flax, seconded by Councilor Morton, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

2013-0090

Judson Avenue Drainage Project

JUDSON AVENUE DRAINAGE PROJECT

Mayor Somers requested a referral to revisit Judson Avenue drainage issues.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn at 8:54 p.m. was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Schmidt and so voted unanimously.

Attest:

*Betsy Moukawsher, Town Clerk
Clerk of the Council*

Lori Watrous, Office Assistant